

# Putting the "GREEN" in GREENSCAPE — Revisited

Going into spring, Greenscape Gardens was ready to implement new ideas. Here are two big changes that helped this plant-focused retailer see another successful year.

By Pete Mihalek

It's always nice to hear, "We are just thrilled about the way this season has gone and we are very excited about the fall season because the momentum is quite strong," from a retailer in the middle of July.

Thrilled is Jennifer Schamber and her Greenscape Gardens staff. At the time of that comment, Greenscape was up 7 percent over last year in all major departments. Here are two major changes that benefitted this suburban St. Louis retailer.

## UP THE MERCHANDISING GAME

**LGR:** How did your approach to merchandising change this year?

**Jennifer Schamber:** For our team at Greenscape Gardens, the purpose of merchandising is to help make people aware that there are better options than what they may already know about. We find that a lot of our customers have a mission or goal as to what they want to do, and so our displays cater to these customers' impulsive reactions

as well as their need-based buying decisions. To help guide our customers to make these decisions, we have created a mission-based merchandising strategy, meaning a lot of our merchandising displays demonstrate specific concepts like: solutions to particular problems (deer resistant, drought-resistant, rain gardens), eco-beneficial selections or lifestyle enhancement ideas (tranquility, tropical oasis, edible landscapes).

Our basic merchandising guidelines are outlined in our Greenscape Game Plan Manual so everyone (including the high school guys that load cars) has a general idea of our strategy. Our displays must not only be pretty to look at, but they must demonstrate the core values of our company throughout the store. For 2013, we defined these values in our new branded program called "Eco-Easy: Easy To Use, Easy On The Earth." This program encompasses several departments in our store including our large selection of native and adaptive plants, our "Foodscape" department, and our Natural Gardening Solutions department.



## CONSIDER THE CURB

**LGR:** You eliminated an entire department this year. How much did that help the overall business?

**Schamber:** The best merchandising plan is useless if nobody sees it, so this year, we expanded a new area to display our most colorful products along a busy road. We were able to do this by closing off a driveway that led to our bulk products, which we discontinued this year because it had been a dying department with low margins.

Being conservative on my estimates, we've added about 7,500 square feet of curb appeal.

Our freshest and most dynamic

product selections are front and center, which has attracted a lot of new customers. This summer, we made plans to give up four parking spaces (which is made up for over in our tree department, which happens to be another department in which we are decreasing inventory), and we expanded our seasonal displays so that we will have our entire road frontage filled with merchandised inventory.

The numbers stand behind these changes. In tropicals alone, we have increased sales in that department by over 50 percent this year over last year; up 20 percent in annuals.

